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A. C. TRUE, Director.

AGRICULTURAL FAIR ASSOCIATIONS AND
THEIR UTILIZATION IN AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

BY

JOHN HAMILTON,
Farmers' Institute Specialist, Office of Experiment Stations.



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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF EXPERIMENT STATIONS,
Washington, D. C., December 20, 1910.

SIR: Now that a systematic effort is being made by the agricultural colleges and experiment stations, as well as by the State and national departments of agriculture, to carry agricultural instruction to the great body of rural people, the importance of having efficient local agencies in each community through which to operate is being realized as never before. In many States fair associations exist in almost every county. These associations are usually corporate bodies organized for the improvement of agriculture in the community or district in which they are located. This they undertake to do chiefly through a system of competitions whose main features are exhibits of implements and machinery, of superior animals, and of various products of the household and the farm.

A corporate body, such as the county fair association, with aims and methods of demonstration in harmony with those of the colleges and departments of agriculture, could, if properly organized and directed, be a most efficient agency for representing these educational institutions and for cooperating with them in their local work.

With a view to aiding fair associations to be of greater benefit to the agricultural communities in which they are located and to be in position to cooperate with the colleges and agricultural departments in their efforts for rural betterment, the accompanying discussion, on the subject of Agricultural Fair Associations and Their Utilization in Agricultural Education and Improvement, by John Hamilton, Farmers' Institute Specialist of this Office, has been prepared and is recommended for publication as a circular of this Office.

The circular is the result of extended study of the conditions that exist in the various States in connection with county fairs and is a contribution toward increasing their usefulness by suggesting lines of effort along which they can act for the betterment of educational, social, and economic conditions in rural communities.

Respectfully,

A. C. TRUE,
Director.

Hon. JAMES WILSON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

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AGRICULTURAL FAIR ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR UTILIZATION IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

Now that the better utilization of organized agencies for the improvement of agriculture is being generally considered, attention is naturally directed to the county fair association as a force which, if properly directed and developed, might be of great service, since it provides a local agency in each county that is directly interested in the development of the agriculture of that particular county and possesses the requisite legal power to act in directions that it may deem best for accomplishing its purposes. There are over 1,200 county fair associations in the United States, with a registered membership of approximately 250,000. Their annual gross receipts amount to about \$6,500,000, and their expenditures for premiums to almost \$2,500,000.^a

^aAn investigation in 1910 by the farmers' institute specialist of the Office of Experiment Stations into the operations of the county fair associations of the United States shows that there were 1,203 of these associations in existence in 1909. Replies to inquiries were received from 465 of these organizations, or 38.65 per cent of the whole number, representing 37 States.

The registered membership of the associations reporting was 95,321, and the total attendance in 1909 was 6,103,227. The total receipts were:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| From gate receipts----- | \$1, 331, 594. 09 |
| From concessions----- | 394, 081. 75 |
| From county appropriations----- | 23, 270. 38 |
| From State appropriations----- | 273, 327. 52 |
| From other sources----- | 503, 476. 31 |
| Total ----- | 2, 525, 750. 05 |

These associations offered in premiums \$1,226,214.18, and paid in premiums in 1909. \$994,265.26. If the remaining 61.35 per cent of the whole number of associations not reporting average in attendance, receipts, premiums offered and paid equally with the 38.65 per cent reporting, the total for the entire 1,203 societies would be, in membership, 246,600; attendance, 15,791,000; gross income, \$6,534,900; amount paid in premiums, \$2,572,400.

Reports were also received from 18 State associations, holding fairs in 1909, as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Total attendance----- | <u>1, 490, 029</u> |
| Income from— | |
| Gate receipts----- | \$630, 554 |
| Concessions----- | 193, 200 |
| State appropriations----- | 361, 214 |
| Other sources----- | 244, 114 |
| Total ----- | <u>1, 429, 082</u> |

The amount offered in premiums by these State fair associations in 1909 was \$367,809. The amount paid in premiums was \$270,187.

**PRESENT NEED FOR EFFICIENT LOCAL AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATIONS.**

That need exists for proper local associations to aid in the improvement of rural conditions is admitted by all who have studied the country problem.

There is, first of all, the great fundamental need of increasing production. This of itself is sufficient reason for the existence of organizations in each county to give intelligent attention to soils, fertilizers, animals, crops, tillage, moisture supply, drainage, seed selection, fruit culture, the farm wood lot, and the many other items directly affecting agricultural production.

Then there is the need for the improvement of the highways, the consolidation of rural schools, the adaptation of the courses of study in these schools to country life, the betterment of agricultural homes and their surroundings, the economical marketing of products and purchasing of farm supplies, etc.

Agricultural educational institutions, particularly the agricultural colleges and experiment stations, are looking for more efficient means for reaching country people with agricultural information, and now that extension departments are being organized in all of these colleges, the need for efficient local institutions in each county to act as centers from which to operate is very apparent. The county fair associations are already organized as public agencies for the dissemination of agricultural information, and it is only necessary to strengthen their organization and work in order to give them a larger and more important place in our rapidly developing system of agricultural education.

The county fair has already been found to be a most valuable assistant to the agricultural college and experiment station wherever its services have been utilized, and the college in turn has greatly strengthened the fair association through its support in furnishing educational exhibits and skilled demonstrators and judges at the annual shows, and by setting a high standard along all lines for rural betterment.

In response to inquiries sent out to the agricultural colleges and experiment stations of the United States it is found that out of 47 States and Territories reporting, 13 colleges and 5 stations sent separate exhibits to State or county fairs in 1908, and that 18 other colleges and stations united their material into joint exhibits and sent them to State or county fairs. Many of these collections were very elaborate, including beef and dairy cattle, swine, sheep, poultry, fruits, vegetables, forestry products, nursery stock, models of farm buildings, samples of cakes, bread, canned and dried fruits, preserves, pickles, samples of needle work, exhibits of stenographic work, type-

writing, samples of business letters, examination papers, charts; also specimens of feeds and forage crops, model dairy plans, plans for model farms, specimens of insects and fungus growths, tables giving the composition and yields of various crops, samples of soils, spraying apparatus; forge, lathe, and hand work in wood and metal, and similar articles exhibiting the character of the educational work of the institution. These exhibits were in charge of expert demonstrators to explain their characteristics and reply to inquiries respecting the work of the college or station. One institution had nine demonstrators at a single fair. In all cases the exhibits were of an educational character, and of use in teaching the subjects of agriculture, domestic science, or mechanic arts.

Farming people particularly were interested in these exhibits and their appreciation and value have been such as to prompt the college authorities to continue and enlarge them. The colleges and stations were represented during that year at 101 fairs, being limited in the number only by the amount of money available for bearing the expense.

Among the advantages claimed by the institutions from their exhibitions at these fairs are:

- (1) Opportunity to meet farmers personally and explain the work of the institution.
- (2) Opportunity to secure cooperators in demonstration work.
- (3) Opportunity for the college to conduct agricultural schools and short courses and demonstrations while the exhibition is in progress.
- (4) Opportunity to initiate new movements for the improvement of agriculture.
- (5) Opportunity for the education of fair managers in the conduct of agricultural exhibitions.
- (6) Opportunity for collecting into one place the results of field demonstrations for the inspection of the public.
- (7) Providing a place for the exhibition of the results of contest work by school children and country youth.
- (8) Enabling the college and station to secure the names and addresses of representative farmers and of young people with whom to correspond in disseminating agricultural information, and in securing cooperation in projects for rural improvement.

THE FAIR REDIRECTED AND ENLARGED.

All that the present fair association needs for immediate action in the wider field now open is a change of view as to its mission and scope and a practical plan for carrying on its work. Its activities need to be redirected and enlarged to fit the association to take advantage of the opportunities for aiding rural betterment that lie

before it. If it is to be a leader in rural betterment its organization and methods must be carefully outlined in advance to be in accord with the conditions that control success in such enterprises. As careful study should be made by the management, of the needs of farming people as well as of their peculiarities and temperament, as if those interested in the fair were about to invest in a department store or engage in the manufacture on a large scale of an article or articles intended for general use.

The fair even if assisted by the State will be largely dependent upon public patronage for its success. If public patronage is to be secured and held the fair as a whole must be made sufficiently interesting to attract those whose presence is desired. In doing this it can not descend to the use of low or questionable methods or to cheap, vulgar, or tawdry shows no matter how great the crowd these may draw or how remunerative they may be. Its attractions must be of a character that will elevate and instruct, or if for entertainment the exhibition must be free from everything that suggests evil, ridicules purity, or tends to deceive, defraud, or vulgarize the public.

The fair that is to be a worthy leader and is to meet the needs of country people must be strong, clean, full of interest, well managed, and in entire sympathy with country life. It must first of all and above all be loyal to its own constituency, the agricultural public, and not be swerved from serving them in the most effective way by any influence or set of influences that it may encounter, however enticing.

EXHIBITS.

The fair in its main feature is an exhibition. Its character is therefore determined almost entirely by the grade and variety of the articles that it displays. Since its main purpose is to improve rural life in all of its phases, the exhibits should be of a kind that will contribute to that end. The basis, therefore, of the fair should be exhibits from the farm, the garden, the wood lot, horticultural exhibits, household exhibits, poultry, domestic animals, agricultural implements and machinery, models of country homes with sanitary surroundings and modern conveniences, forest products, manufactured articles, and educational exhibits of methods, courses of study, school buildings and grounds, and school gardens adapted to rural conditions.

The entries for premiums should be open to individuals, to institutions, and to communities. A brief statement made out upon a card should be attached to each exhibit showing by whom it is exhibited, the feature it is intended to display, with such additional information as may be important to a proper understanding and appreciation of its use and economic value.

Each class of exhibits should be set up by an expert and be attended by some one capable of explaining the quality and uses of the several articles in his section. Whenever possible the exhibitor of the article or animal should be present in person during the fair and call attention to the valuable features of the things that he is exhibiting. If samples only are shown of larger quantities on hand for sale, they should be accompanied by a statement of the quantity that is thus available and the price, with a guarantee that the goods to be delivered shall be true to sample.

JUDGING.

The judging for premiums ought to be by disinterested experts, and every award should be accompanied with a statement showing why it was given, and the judges should be ready to make a public defense, if called upon, in support of their conclusions. The State department of agriculture might have lists of persons on file certified as capable judges in the various groups of exhibits, who would be available for service at county fairs at a stated compensation.

SPACE.

A moderate amount of space should be furnished free to each exhibitor, and any additional space required should be charged for at a reasonable rate.

FEED AND ATTENDANTS.

Hay and bedding for animals could in many localities be provided free. Grain for feeding should be kept on hand to be sold at moderate rates to exhibitors of animals or to visitors who merely wish a single ration. A list should be kept at the secretary's office of reliable persons who may be hired by exhibitors to take care of their stock or for such other service as may be required.

DEMONSTRATIONS.

Certain stated periods each day should be devoted to demonstrations to be held at different places on the grounds. These demonstrations might be the packing of fruit; the use of the Babcock test; spraying operations, including the mixing of sprays, as well as their application; killing, dressing, and packing poultry for market; sanitary handling of milk; transplanting, budding, and pruning trees; seed selection; germination tests; laying out and planting garden plats; stock judging; canning, preserving, and drying fruits; cheese making; butter making; testing agricultural machinery; disinfecting rooms, stables, and clothing; conducting cooking schools, dress-making and millinery school; demonstration plat work; plowing matches, and similar contests.

These demonstrations can be made valuable features of the fair depending upon the skill of those in charge of them. Machinery in motion, processes in course of performance, and other forms of effort in actual operation attract attention and are never-failing sources of interest.

By stopping all other exercises and concentrating attention upon the demonstration features for an hour or two each day, variety will be given to the exhibition, and valuable information can be imparted free from interruption or distraction by other exercises.

CONTESTS.

Contests in crop production, animal breeding and feeding, and other agricultural operations should be organized early in the year, the results to be exhibited at the fair. Persons entering such contests should be required to declare in advance their intention to compete, in order to shut out crops or animals that are the result not of skill but of mere accident or chance.

In all such contests accurate data should accompany each report showing the items of cost in producing the article and the methods pursued. The premiums offered should be for results secured under conditions possible to every farmer of intelligence, and be for operations above those on a miniature scale. To exhibit 10 ears of corn out of a crop of 40 acres is no evidence of superior farming, but to exhibit 10 superior acres out of such an area is a real test of skill and worthy of proper recognition. For persons in control of farms the contests should be in operations of sufficient size to require the exercise of more than ordinary exertion and skill. For boys and girls they could be adapted to suit the means at their command.

ENTERTAINMENTS AND AMUSEMENTS.

Trials of speed, acrobatic and sleight-of-hand performances, exhibitions of trained animals, moving pictures, the merry-go-round, military drill, games of ball, foot races, and other athletic sports, balloon ascensions, and similar entertainments are all unobjectionable when properly controlled, and provide entertainment to those who come to spend an idle hour. They should, however, not be permitted to interfere with the main exhibition and the more serious purposes of the fair. The association must first of all be loyal to the industry that it represents. To insure this its entertainments should be restricted to certain hours, and when presented opportunity should be given to all to witness and to enjoy them.

All disreputable shows, gambling devices, and loud coarse fakirs with monstrosities to exhibit, should be rigidly excluded from the grounds. Nothing that the most refined and modest woman might

not see or hear should be admitted. All others ought to be shut out as unworthy of a place in a self-respecting community, and the superintendent of this department should be held to strict accountability for the enforcement of this rule, and an adequate police force should be at his disposal for the purpose.

The expenses attendant upon the presentation of the open air entertainment features of the fair could be met by the fair association, and for this a specific appropriation might be made. Such in-door sports or entertainments as the merry-go-round, moving pictures, animal exhibits, and sleight-of-hand performances, can be permitted to charge an entrance fee, the amount to be agreed upon with the managers of the fair.

CONCESSIONS.

Boarding houses, restaurants, advertising and selling agencies of approved standing, and all legitimate business and industry may be given a place in the fair under well-defined regulations that protect the public against fraud or overcharge.

Charges for these concessions should be in accordance with the business transacted. A cash payment should be required for the initial privilege or ground rent, and then a percentage of profits on the sales.

All of the concessions should be under the strictest regulation and surveillance to insure that no improper advantage is taken of the public in attendance at the fair.

No concessions should be granted to sell intoxicating drinks or other injurious beverages, or to license the advertising or selling of articles of questionable value, or to conduct any game of chance, or to furnish amusements or entertainments jeopardizing life or limb.

FINANCES.

The receipts of the fair association are from admittance fees, such as gate receipts, family tickets, and life memberships; from concessions, rents, and lectures; and from purses contributed for special purposes.

The variability from year to year in amount of income from these sources, due to unfavorable weather at the time of the fair, the presence of epidemic disease in the neighborhood, rival attractions, local prejudice, and other causes has prevented the proper development of the county fair, through fear on the part of the management lest their officers be left at the close of the exhibition with a large indebtedness on their hands for which they will be individually liable.

STATE AND COUNTY AID.

An assured income is a necessity if the fair is to do its work efficiently and expand as the needs of the country develop. State or county aid, or both, is essential in any system of fair organization that is to serve the people and improve their methods. The lack of such an income is responsible for the presence of most of the objectionable features admitted to fairs at present, and for the consequent loss by the fair both of prestige and support by farming people. The management must be independent of need of the money that fakirs and gamblers offer for the privilege of swindling visitors.

Grants of money to the fair association by the county or the State are therefore a necessity without which the best and most useful type of the fair can not exist. These grants should be carefully guarded so as to stimulate and not enfeeble effort on the part of local people, and to insure that the funds are not used in promoting worthless projects or visionary schemes. The representatives of the State boards of agriculture appointed to see to the proper conduct of the county fair should also be charged with making inquiry into its use of the public funds, and if these are squandered or used in violation of law, subsequent appropriations should be withheld until the portions so misused shall have been refunded to the State or county and satisfactory assurance given that future grants will be properly expended.

EXPENDITURES.

Expenditures by the association are for premiums, salaries of officers, of lecturers and expert judges, rent, permanent improvements, interest on indebtedness, and other miscellaneous minor items.

When the fairs are conducted for the public advantage and not for private gain, there is no reason why these expenses should not be met out of the public funds. The State, on the other hand, should be secured in such of its appropriations as are expended in the purchase of property or for permanent improvements, by liens that will protect its interest in case of loss by fire or by sale of the property. The balance of the funds in such case after reimbursing the stockholders, if any, should be paid over to the county treasurer to be invested and held for such future use in aid of agriculture as the court of that county may direct.

Reports of the executive committee of the association showing the receipts and expenditures of the fair association at its exhibitions should be made as promptly as possible after the exhibition has been held, and copies of these reports should be transmitted to the secretary of the State board of agriculture, the county treasurers of the counties in which the fairs are located, and to the State auditor for approval and record.

PREMIUMS.

The character of the premiums awarded may vary indefinitely, and be in the form of cash, medals, certificates, or other recognition of merit according to the importance of the display and its place in rural industry. The award should be for excellence, and no matter how many articles are exhibited in a class or how few, no premium should be given unless deserved.

The competition is not so much with others as with excellence. The exhibits, therefore, should be rated and the award made as this is approached. Accordingly, for the information of competitors, there should be published with each class of exhibits the requirements that will be considered by the judges, and as far as possible the percentage for each requirement as it enters into the make-up of a standard article or animal in that class.

Special premiums should be offered for new methods, or for new plants, animals, or implements introduced and of superior excellence. Similar special premiums should be offered for successful farms, for special crops, or for herds of animals reared by the owner on any farm, and for superior orchards and gardens; for school buildings, including also churchyards, country cemeteries, and other items that can not be shown at the fair, but are worthy of special recognition as evidences of intelligent treatment or marked success.

LOCATION OF THE GROUNDS.

The fair grounds should be accessible to steam and trolley lines. If possible, the buildings should not be far from some town, of a size sufficient at least to supply hotel accommodations for visitors during the fair and with a population that can be depended upon for patronage. In most instances the county town is the most advantageous location owing to its size and the opportunities afforded for visitors to shop and attend to such legal business as may require the advice of an attorney or access to the county records.

Location near a town is also insurance against total failure in times of unfavorable weather that prevents attendance by visitors from the adjoining country. Local pride sometimes secures support by the town residents that would be wholly absent if the fair had no constituency specially interested in its success. Exhibits also of great variety can frequently be had from the business houses of the town, and from private collections where the location is within easy reach.

SIZE OF THE GROUNDS.

The amount of land considered necessary for a county fair has heretofore been determined largely by the size of the speedway or racing course. The course varies from one-third to one-half or to

even 1 mile in length, and the grounds have been correspondingly extended to accommodate this length. Leaving out of account the racing features, the requirements of an ordinary fair would be simply for room indoors sufficient to accommodate the exhibits of farm products, animals, and machinery, together with a show ring with seating capacity for from 500 to 1,000 persons, depending upon the locality. This last can also be used as an audience hall for public meetings. Rooms should be provided for the president, the secretary, and the various committees. There should also be police and hospital accommodations and quarters for superintendents and assistants, together with ample storage room for forage and for the deposit of packing cases, also rooms for lunch counters, rest rooms, and a place for the power plant. If grounds are attached the outdoor space should be sufficient for demonstration plats, samples of school gardens, an arboretum, flower gardens, grass plats, small orchard, shrubbery clumps, samples of properly constructed roads, walks, fences, and arbors, with such additions as the importance of the community and its degree of prosperity make it practicable to own and utilize.

From 2 to 5 acres are ample for a county fair to use in its exhibitions. More than this is usually unutilized waste, and is generally unkempt in appearance and an injury to the fair instead of a benefit. Substantial buildings well arranged and small grounds planted with interesting material and neatly kept are the ideal.

By restricting the area the fair can be held in the edge of a town and be easily reached on foot. By having it thus accessible and beautified as a park, it will soon become a public resort for the citizens, and by having the buildings adapted to use for lectures, shows, theatrical performances, and other purposes, and capable of being heated in the winter and thrown open in the summer, the chief difficulty in the way of making the enterprise financially successful will be met. Although unfavorable weather may interfere with a full attendance, yet it will not wholly prevent a reasonable number of the citizens of the town from coming out. The fact that the grounds are near by and that the buildings can be heated in the winter and be lighted at night, making them available for meetings, midwinter fairs, and similar uses, enables the management to secure from rentals sufficient income to materially aid in maintaining and extending the work of the association. Some of the rooms could be fitted up and rented permanently for offices or for business purposes, the occupants not to be disturbed when the fair is held.

If the buildings are to be utilized in the wintertime they must be well constructed and be kept neat and clean. If they are architecturally attractive and convenient in arrangement there will be little difficulty in a portion of them being remunerative the year round, instead of a constant expense. In some instances it would be

possible to keep open an agricultural museum, a library of reference, exhibit of samples of agricultural implements, besides accommodating the office of the county secretary. The county fair buildings would thus soon become a recognized business center where farmers and others who come to town to make purchases could meet appointments and where women could find a comfortable place to rest.

The location of the grounds and the arrangement and equipment of the buildings are therefore most important matters if the fair is to be a financial and educational success and be serviceable to the community during the entire year.

CUSTODIAN.

A custodian should be on the grounds continually throughout the year to see that nothing is molested, and that the buildings are ready for use whenever needed. He should be empowered to arrest trespassers or persons injuring the property. If stock stables for breeding purposes are maintained he could be kept employed in overseeing and caring for the animals. If a park and experiment plats and gardens or plantations are laid out he could find plenty to do in keeping them in order and attending to their cultivation. The buildings, by having a custodian in charge, can be insured and thus be protected against loss by fire.

WATER SUPPLY.

An abundant supply of wholesome water is most important, and the fair grounds should not be located where this can not be had. Where connection with a town water system is not possible a reservoir supplied either from springs or from a well is a necessity. The pumping engine should be of sufficient capacity to throw a large quantity of water in case of fire or other emergency.

SEWERAGE.

The safe disposition of sewage is a most important part of the equipment of a fair that is to be permanent. Connection with the town sewer system is often the most convenient and economical method of its disposal. Where this is impracticable a cesspool that can be disinfected is an alternative. Disposition of sewage can also be made by means of septic tanks.

PUBLIC COMFORT.

Well-arranged and sanitary rooms or buildings should be located in easily accessible places as retiring rooms, fitted up with basins and closets. Custodians should be in charge to see that everything is kept clean and fit for use.

LIGHTING.

A thorough and safe system of artificial lighting should be installed. This is not only necessary for evening performances, but it is the cheapest and most effective protection at night against disorder and theft that can be devised.

TELEPHONE SERVICE.

A local telephone connecting the main offices with the police headquarters and with all of the principal buildings, including the hospital and the general-service phones or telegraph office of the community, should be established.

HOSPITAL.

There should be a building for a hospital, with a physician and nurse in attendance, and with conveniences for the care of any persons taken ill or receiving injury while in attendance at the fair. An ambulance, which may also serve as a patrol wagon, and a set of stretchers should be at hand for bringing any sick or injured to the hospital, or for removing them for the purpose of taking a train, or, if necessary, for taking them to their homes.

POLICE SERVICE.

The security of the articles entered and committed to the care of the fair association by the exhibitor must be as nearly complete as possible. This requires a faithful and efficient corps of police to be on duty day and night until the articles are returned to their owners. Every member on the force should be well recommended before employment, and explicit instructions should be given to each respecting his particular duties. The chief of the police force should be a man thoroughly interested in the fair and identified with its management and not be an outsider hired temporarily for the purpose. Part of the force should be in citizen's clothes, with no outward badge or insignia to show their position or authority. A guardhouse should be on the grounds, with a room for the confinement of offenders, and the house should be fitted also with sleeping rooms for the accommodation of the police force. They should go on duty in reliefs of two to four hours, similar to the guard in military service. One or two competent detectives should also be on hand to identify professional crooks, and see that they are arrested and shipped away promptly on arrival.

Good order on the grounds is a necessity if the fair is to be a place where visitors shall be free from annoyance or insult. Prompt

action therefore should be taken in the arrest of intoxicated people, the quarrelsome, the profane, or otherwise misbehaved. Their immediate arrest and subsequent punishment will insure a clean fair and go very far also toward making it a financial success. A patrol wagon, which may also serve as a hospital ambulance, should be at hand to transport offenders to the lockup or general prison. The local justice of the peace should have an office on the grounds and be accessible at all hours of the day.

FIRE APPARATUS.

The police should be provided with fire apparatus to be ready for prompt use in case of need. A chemical outfit and hand grenades for extinguishing fires should be in all of the buildings and be readily accessible and the police be instructed in their use.

SANITARY REGULATIONS.

The police force should also see that all unsanitary practices are prevented, and that the public-comfort buildings are kept in good condition; that littering the grounds and buildings with paper, shavings, or other unsightly material is prevented. To aid in keeping the grounds clean, receptacles convenient for the deposit of waste paper, banana skins, and other rubbish should be provided.

ADVERTISING.

Much of the success of the fair will be dependent upon the good judgment exercised in advertising it. Circus managers appreciate the importance of this and have reduced their methods in this respect to a system that is complete and insures profitable returns. Failure to make the fair known, or to make it known in an attractive way, will seriously affect both the number of exhibits offered and the attendance when the fair is open. A good press agent, therefore, is a necessity if the fair is to surpass the ordinary exhibition of previous years.

SEASON FOR HOLDING FAIRS.

Successful fairs are being held at all seasons of the year—midwinter, spring, midsummer, and autumn—depending upon the object to be attained and the accommodations. The midwinter fair must, of necessity, be indoors. For this, closed and heated accommodations must be provided sufficient for the exhibits and for the visitors who attend. The exhibits at the winter fair are usually confined to live stock, seeds, grains, poultry, florist's plants, and exhibits along the lines of domestic science and household art. Those in the spring

show implements, machinery, nursery stock, vegetable seeds, hotbed plants, fertilizers, dairy and creamery products, household furniture, and samples of grain, such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, clover, and timothy seeds for spring planting, exhibited as specimens of larger quantities held in store for sale.

The summer fairs exhibit the products of agriculture of the season, as summer fruits, garden vegetables, grain and forage crops, live stock and poultry, household articles, manufactures, agricultural implements and machinery, samples of grains for autumn seeding, berries, school gardens, forest plantations, model samples of school grounds, experiment plats, seed testing on trial plats, stock judging, testing dairy cows, and similar exhibits. The summer fair partakes largely of the nature of a harvest-home picnic or summer outing, and includes lectures and addresses by eminent agriculturists and others interested in rural betterment.

The autumn fairs are held in most of the States in the months of September and October, and comprise a collection of the products of the year. They are the principal fairs of the season.

BREEDING STABLES.

A very important service that the fair association can render is in giving assistance to those who are interested in rearing better stock. The difficulty that confronts farmers in many sections, who wish to improve their stock, is the impossibility of securing the service of well-bred sires. There can be no improvement in our domestic animals until well-bred sires are introduced and their use be had at rates low enough to be within the reach of farmers of ordinary means.

The county fair association could do no better service for live-stock improvement than to purchase or hire the use of one or two well-bred sires of each of the leading breeds of horses, cattle, sheep, and swine, and have them kept for service at moderate rates, and offer these services at these reduced rates to those only who are members of the fair association, thus inducing the more progressive farmers to join the society and aid in its support. There is no reason why this can not be done, and at the same time make it a source of revenue to the association.

As an inducement to undertake this work a special grant of money might be made by the State or county, to be offered to such associations as will maintain breeding barns of well-bred sires. As a purely business proposition no better investment can be made of public funds than to supply the aid necessary to bring about such action, for a slight improvement upon each animal will add enormously to the wealth of the agricultural people of the State.

PAID SECRETARY.

If the fair association is to fulfill its mission, its influence will have to be felt for more than the few days during which the exhibition is held. It will have to be an active force the year round. Before this can be done there must be a paid secretary who can devote all of his time to the affairs of the association. The secretary should be an expert in agricultural matters and not a mere clerk with little or no practical or theoretical knowledge of this industry.

HOW SHALL COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATIONS BE INDUCED TO UNDERTAKE THIS WORK?

Many associations are now ready for what has been here outlined, and will be glad to undertake the work if a practicable plan is shown. Others will need urging. This will require the personal efforts of organizers to meet their managers and show them precisely how they can do at least some of the things that are needed, leaving the others, if necessary, for future consideration after the movement is well under way.

Responsibility for and the initiative in this work might be given to the State boards and departments of agriculture. Agents could be employed by them to visit the several counties to organize new fair associations, and to reorganize the old. Later, these agents should revisit the societies to see that they understand what is proposed and to assist them when necessary in carrying out the project. This is a kind of service that the State departments of agriculture are specially fitted to undertake, and, in securing valuable results to agriculture, is as promising a field of effort as any other that they have hitherto attempted.

Most of the State departments or boards of agriculture have interested themselves in the local fair associations very little beyond collecting copies of their premium lists and getting records of attendance and the amount of the gate receipts. If they will devote some of their time and money to sending out an expert or several experts to organize county fairs and to advise with their officers and aid them in carrying on their work, they will not only be increasing their usefulness to the farming industry, but their action will also be in direct keeping with the purpose of the Commonwealth in establishing State departments for the benefit of agriculture.

APPENDIX.

The following suggestions for the organization of fair associations and for the management of exhibitions in the interest of rural people are presented with a view to aiding those who are interested in this form of public education to establish and conduct successfully a county fair that shall be free from the objectionable features that have too frequently been permitted in the past, an exhibition that shall possess only desirable characteristics such as shall interest, entertain, and instruct.

ORGANIZATION FOR A COUNTY FAIR.

The organization to be most effective should be a legal body with full authority for conducting the business of the association. Perhaps the best method for securing this is by a State law providing that if a minimum number of citizens subscribe to a form of agreement or constitution and pay annually into their treasury a certain per capita sum, and hold annually a minimum number of open meetings in the interest of agriculture, and shall file a copy of their constitution and by-laws, together with a list of their membership, with the auditor general of the State and with the court of record of the county, the organization thus effected shall be a body corporate in law and entitled to the exercise of the powers and be subject to the obligations prescribed by the act of assembly providing for such associations.

The act might set forth in definite terms the following items:

Membership.—Men and women over 21 years of age, resident of the county, shall be eligible to membership upon subscribing to a constitution embodying the terms of the act of assembly relating to county fairs, and upon the payment of an initiation fee of \$—, and annual dues of at least \$—. The minimum number necessary to organize not to be less than —.

Officers.—The officers of the association shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and an executive committee composed of — persons, two of whom shall be the president and secretary of the association, all to be elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the association by the qualified members thereof from their membership, to hold office for one year or until their successors are chosen, except, that the secretary and the treasurer may be from outside of the membership, and that the secretary shall be elected for three years or until his successor is chosen.

Special committees.—The form of organization should provide for special committees, as committees on schools, roads, and similar subjects of rural interest, and also for the appointment of superintendents of departments, clerks, assistants, and other employees necessary for carrying on the work of the association.

Supervision by State board.—There should be general oversight of the county associations by the secretary of the State board or department of agriculture, who should be empowered to fix the dates for the annual exhibitions so as to avoid conflicts, and to this end he should district the State into sections or circuits, limiting them to a size that will enable the fairs in each section to be held within the brief season at which fairs are usually held, without interfering with each other, and to have them come in such consecutive order as will require of officers and exhibitors the least amount of travel and inconvenience to attend. At each fair there should be a representative of the State department of agriculture to see that the legal requirements governing the exhibits and the management of fairs are complied with.

CONVENTION OF COUNTY FAIR REPRESENTATIVES.

A general meeting of representatives from all of the fair associations of the State should be held each year for conference and the discussion of the questions that arise in the administration of the work of the county associations. The presidents and secretaries of the local associations should be ex officio delegates to these meetings and three others, chosen at the annual meetings.

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